

✓ ^{8th March? 1826}
T H O U G H T S

8th Jan'y 82

ON THE

P R E S E N T S T A T E

O F T H E

COLLEGE of DUBLIN;

ADDRESSED TO THE

Gentlemen of the University.

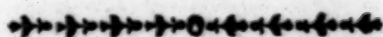
*By J. Forsyth Esq
J F F Esq*

D U B L I N :

Printed in the Year 1782.



TO THE
GENTLEMEN
OF THE
UNIVERSITY.



GENTLEMEN,

IT is very extraordinary that, when a general spirit of redress hath gone forth, and every other part of the community hath made use of the opportunities which were lately offered to relieve itself from oppression, ye alone have seemed insensible of the grievances which immediately affect you. Ye are not slow in feeling the public wrongs; and, in the doctrines taught among you, is found the vivifying principle of that flame of liberty, which hath shone from one end of the kingdom to the other. But while you are employed in admiring those who assert the rights of the public, you omit to vindicate your own.

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I will make your apology. For a long series of years, all hope of applying a remedy to the distress and discouragements, which this nation in general, and every branch of it in particular laboured under, had been lost. From the time when it so unexpectedly revived, the stupendous objects, which engaged the attention of the whole nation, had also engrossed yours.

The sun of Freedom had shone suddenly in the midst of darkness. Ye were dazzled by his rays, and could not distinctly discern every part of the glorious prospect before you. Animated by that generous ardour, which characterises the natives of this country, ye disregarded the weight of your own concerns, while the fate of the kingdom was in the balance. But now, that all those great questions which agitated the nation have been discussed, and the ferment they occasioned has terminated in a success, though not equal to our wishes, yet sufficient to shew the utility of exertion; it behoves you to reflect on the injuries which the University hath sustained in the general calamity, and to remind the nation, that the mischiefs which affect it, are of great and universal concern.

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Every one among you must be conscious, that, although outwardly the University may wear a more splendid appearance than ever, and although its estate may be actually encreasing; yet, it neither commands the respect which it has done in former times, nor can you hope the same advantages from having gone through a course of education in it, which your predecessors have enjoyed.

But as many may not have particularly considered the evils with which it is threatened, or which it actually suffers, and the younger part of the society, struck by the exterior, may not be aware of their existence; my time, I trust, will not be misemployed, in pointing out their nature, extent, and the causes from which they proceed.

They may be divided into two branches. First, as they relate to the Fellows; and, Secondly, as they affect the Students. I shall treat of each in its order.

It is acknowledged, that there is no order of men, to speak of them in general, of greater learning, of more distinguished abilities, or who undergo a stricter test of both, than the
Fellows

Fellows of the College of Dublin. Many of them are capable of appearing with advantage in the Republic of Letters; and scarcely any seem to want natural activity of mind. Yet, a degree of inactivity, and seeming despondency appears to prevail among them, which checks all attempts to acquire literary fame. Though jealous of the character of the seminary in which they preside, and anxious for its honour, they are contented with performing the ordinary duties of their station. Though conscious of their own powers, they have, for the most part, preserved silence in the world of science, and seemed little anxious to wipe out that reproach which hath been so often, though so unjustly thrown * upon this University, that it offered no contributions to the fund of scienti-

* This reproachful assertion is not founded in fact. This College boasts of having produced (besides numerous other writers) no less men than Usher, King, Dodwell, Browne, Berkeley; Chandler, late bishop of Durham; Wilson, late bishop of Man; Swift; and in the Dramatic path, Southern, Congreve, and Farquhar; in more modern times, Dr. Sullivan, Dr. Goldsmith, and Mr. Burke. A reproach so unjust, it is probable, would not so often be repeated, if portraits of eminent writers, who have been educated in the College of Dublin, were procured and hung up in one of the public rooms, as is the practice in the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge.

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fic wealth. These are extraordinary truths. There must be a cause. It cannot be imagined that the Fellows are in fault. We know their genius, their knowledge, and their spirit too well to believe it. We must look then for some extrinsic source, for some cause which prevents their having either opportunity or inclination to attend those pursuits, to which they would otherwise be naturally attached. And this, I think I can shew, may be ultimately resolved into the utter inattention of government to the University, which hath, in this respect, followed a policy different from that of all other governments which ever existed.

It hath been constantly their wisdom to conciliate the good-will and affections of the Universities under their care, and to consider their disposition as the most significative mark of the temper of the nation. As they are the seats of learning, the nurseries of arts and sciences, they are known to give impressions to all those who, having been formed under the care of such mothers, come out into the world to act a more public part. As monuments of the piety and munificence of our forefathers, they
occasion

occasion a sort of religious awe and veneration for every thing which belongs to them. In them their original bent and character is given to most of the Clergy, and to a great part of the gentlemen of the kingdom, who still pay a natural attention to the sentiments of the inhabitants of a place, where they imbibed their first rules of action, and learned the true principles of liberty, and the just foundations of government. In England, accordingly, their good disposition has been cultivated with the utmost care: their remonstrances would be feared; their petitions are heard with eagerness, and no material grievance which affects them is left undressed. Every encouragement is held out to genius and literature. Men of merit are called forth from obscurity, and fixed in stations, in which they may shew themselves an honour to the place of their education, and a public benefit to their country. All ecclesiastical preferments are bestowed upon their sons. Privileges and rewards attend their degrees, in whatever science they are granted. The spirit of emulation is high among them, for interest and glory unite in rousing exertion.

It is very unaccountable, why the policy of the ruling powers in this country should have
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been, for a long series of years, the very reverse of all this. There is in this kingdom only one University, and that, whether we consider the number of its Students, the plan of education there adopted, or the abilities, information and industry of those appointed to the charge of instruction in it, may confessedly be ranked among the first in Europe. The illustrious foundress, Queen Elizabeth, thought it the wisest institution she could adopt, in order to diffuse in Ireland, with the light of science, an attachment to her person and dignity. She displayed the utmost regard for the offspring of her wisdom.

Her successor was not wanting in attention to her favourite object. He increased, with a liberal hand, the estate and patronage of the College.

At the Revolution, our glorious deliverer King William, thought the first step to quieting and conciliating the kingdom, was to secure the affections of the University. The ardour and firmness with which she had withstood his misguided predecessor*, recommended her strongly to

* When James II. lay with his army in Dublin, a mandamus issued to the governors of the University there, to admit

to his countenance and protection. In his reign, and nearly at the same time, the people saw ten Prelates * on the bench, who had been Fellows. The many instances of kindness, which the College continued to experience from his successor, created in it a great affection to her, and thence perhaps it imbibed, in the latter part of her reign, too strong a

admit one Green, a Papist, to be a Senior Fellow. The University was at that time in the utmost distress; no rents could be received, a pension, which they formerly had from the Exchequer, was withheld, and they were obliged to purchase their daily food by selling their plate. James and his forces were at hand, to execute vengeance upon them if they did not comply with his will; yet the governors undauntedly refused obedience to the mandamus. The consequence was, the Fellows and Scholars were forcibly ejected by the King's soldiers. The property of particular members, the communion plate, library, and furniture of the community, were all seized; their chapel was converted into a magazine, their chambers to prisons, several of the Fellows were carried prisoners to the main-guard, and there confined. Yet all this violence of the bigotted prince, could not prevail to make them change their resolution, or yield obedience to his unjust commands. Vid. Archives. Trin. Coll. and Leland's Hist. 3d vol. p. 542.

* Their names were William Loyd, Nath. Fowey, Wm. Palliser, Sam. Foley, Edward Walkington, Tobias Pullein, St. George Ashe, John Pooley, Edw. Smith, Dives Downes.

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tinge of the principles of Toryism. On the accession of the first gracious prince of the House of Hanover, his servants were not slow in pointing out to him this unfavourable feature in the face of Ireland, and no pains were omitted to effect such an alteration as was wished.

Success attended their endeavours, for the voice of truth will be heard. From that period, the College of Dublin has even peculiarly merited the name of a Whig University. From that time the most generous principles of freedom, the most ardent loyalty to the Prince, the warmest attachment to his government, have eminently distinguished it; and from that time, strange as it may appear, it hath been uniformly treated with neglect and indifference, approaching nearly to contempt *.

The effects of this conduct have been such as might reasonably have been expected.—Whenever the genial rays of favour and patronage cease to cherish the growth of science, though by the excellence of the primitive constitution, which supports her, she may be pre-

* Some instances of kindness were shewn the College, in the beginning of the reign of George II. but since that time it seems to have been forgotten.

served from perishing, she will, of necessity, languish and tend to decay. The saying of Anaxagoras is well known, "those who wish to enjoy the light of a lamp, must feed it with oil."

The time is now almost forgotten, when the merit of academical men with us was taken notice of. The eye of administration, so acute in discerning desert in Britain, has long seemed unable to observe it here; yet, surely, there must have been, even of late years, deserving men among us. The reign of dullness is never so long and so uninterrupted. We know such men have existed. We know that some of them have not been wanting in displaying to the world their literary industry*. And though it may be urged, that Fellows of the College of Dublin have no cause to complain of the scantiness of their income; that their situations in life are affluent and honourable; yet, I must beg leave to observe, that they never were indebted in the least degree to power or patronage. I defy any man to produce a single instance to the contrary, except the compliment, for it was no more, of

* Dean Hamilton, Dr. Lawson, Dr. Leland, Mr. Hales, and others.

two paltry livings of 100l. per ann. each, after Curates salaries and other charges are deducted, bestowed upon gentlemen who had the honour of being Chaplains to a Lord Lieutenant; an empty honour, yet very rarely granted to the members of your Society.

Nor let it be said, that these considerations are unworthy of philosophy, unless we will assert that the Augustan age is undeserving of admiration, because it flourished under the auspicious influence of the great; or that parts and learning are now more abundant than they were, when Leo X. and Lewis XIV. declared themselves the patrons of the sciences. Honest emulation is the legal parent of the greatest virtues, and the most generous actions among men. When the seeds of it are rooted out, as I fear they will soon be from our breasts, the tares of inactivity and indolence must succeed. I speak not merely of motives of interest, though it is the duty of the public to provide for those who labour to give instruction, or even to afford innocent amusement. Glory and honour are no more. The laurels of the Muses are dead; and he must be an uncommon man, indeed, who will leave the quiet path of life, to seek labour and fatigue,
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without any hope of enjoying the rewards of fame.

But it will be said, the College itself, within its own walls, affords sufficient encouragement, and there is no occasion to look abroad. I deny the fact; and to prove its falsehood, will trace, from its beginning, the course of a young man proposing himself as a candidate for admission into the respectable body of fellows; for such an assertion can only be intended of the Fellows.

A young man continues for some years after taking his degree, to reside, at an expence nearly equal to that which he had experienced as an under-graduate. During that time, he is employed in a course of study, which is allowed to be the severest and most extensive, that has been made necessary in any seminary in Europe, previously to admission to its honours and emoluments. At the expiration of it, he exposes himself to a contest with many and formidable opponents, in which, consequently, success is very precarious. We will suppose he succeeds. He then finds that he has nothing more to expect, during probably twenty years, than a small pittance, inferior to the income of a town curate,

curate. It is plain, therefore, that if he doth not turn his thoughts to composition, and come forward to the world in the character of an Author, his aversion to such a scheme doth not proceed from luxury or wealth. The truth is, it proceeds from his narrow circumstances: he is too poor to bestow his time that way, *if* he could immediately feel any relish for toil, after the intense application which he hath just intermitted. He hath not the comforts of life which the persons around him enjoy, though his situation is such as to call for some expence: he of necessity, therefore, becomes a tutor: he is now employed from morning till evening in the care of his pupils. When he is not instructing them, watchfulness over their morals, attention to their whole conduct, the necessary correspondence with their parents, engross his mind: he hath not a moment's leisure, if he doth his duty, except for the usual relaxation afforded at meals. And can any one expect, that the miserable fatigued tutor will sit down, at the close of the day, to the business of writing, which requires an unembarrassed mind, and faculties fresh, vigorous, and disengaged?

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It must be allowed that the office of a tutor is useful and necessary. Some persons must be set apart for the care of youth : it is a duty they owe to the public ; and the public are mutually indebted, and their gratitude is due to those who execute with fidelity so important a task. But if this essential business occupies the whole time and attention of the tutor, who doth his duty, as it infallibly will, let him not be accused of indolence. If some of the Fellows were relieved from this harassing duty, if they found it worth while to forego this irksome task, we should not hear complaints, that composition was so rare, or proofs of genius so scarce. But while they are so universally constrained to embrace this employment, numerous publications cannot be expected from them.

We have now pretty well proved, that, for the first sixteen, or perhaps twenty years, after this much extolled object of a fellowship is obtained, no very wonderful encouragement is held out to genius.

Let us proceed, then, to the Senior Fellow : he hath at last attained a comfortable income ; not greater, however, than that of many of
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the beneficed clergy in the kingdom, who, though I do not doubt the merit of most of them, are certainly less indebted to it, than to their connexions. By this time he is far from being a young man: the energetic spring of youth is broken: the active spirit is fled. The duties of his station continue to give him sufficient employment: for he now participates in the charge of governing the society. Each member of the board hath a peculiar department allotted to himself, attended with much trouble, often with great confinement: they all have the common care of superintendence: they are bound, by the strongest ties, to watch over the good of the College, to consult its interests, to enforce its statutes, to manage and regulate its estate, and to leave its revenues unimpaired, and, if possible, improved, to their successors: it is the interest of the public which is before them, not of themselves. Besides these cares, infinite matters of less consequence come before them, respecting the inferior œconomy, tedious and triflingly minute in their nature, yet absolutely necessary to be inspected, and which require long and frequent meetings. We must add the examination of the candidates for fellowships, when vacancies happen, as they, for the most part, do annually;
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this requires considerable preparation, and is, in some measure, a fresh trial of themselves. The Senior Fellow then finds no licence to be idle in his present preferment, which he justly considers also as the price of very great labour, long endured, for which he hath been kept waiting during the whole summer of life. There is nothing before him to excite the exertion of his talents; from the moment a man becomes a Fellow, he seems to be excluded from every benefit which men without the walls enjoy: he is proscribed, and considered as a man who is never to get any other provision than what his own society can afford him, and in a manner looked upon as an inhabitant of another world. Even the only elevation which appeared within the Society, to which they had so natural a claim, with the duties of which they alone could be thoroughly acquainted, which ought undoubtedly to be the reward of academic merit, the Provostship itself, hath been wrested from them, as some think, for ever *. What can be expected from men thus circumstanced? Was it ever said to men in the

* This seems to be a common opinion; but we can hardly suppose, that government is for ever resolved to exclude men of merit, merely because they are College-men.

highest stations at Oxford or Cambridge, where many have larger provision, acquired with greater ease, that, for that reason, they must bid adieu to all hope of advancement without the walls of their Colleges.

Having thus deduced the progress of a Fellow through each stage, we shall come to confess, that his place is not very enviable: and if we add, to what has been already said, that the statutes have generally been supposed, whether truly or not, to restrain him from marriage; that he is forbidden the pleasures of domestic happiness; that the comforts of a parent, and the finest affections which human nature is capable of, are torn from his breast, perhaps few would chuse to exchange conditions with him.

But those who idly talk of the ample provision and pampered indolence of the Fellows, and allege that as the reason why the smiles of favour are never experienced by them, cannot be serious: if they were, how would they account for the neglect shewn the numerous unsuccessful candidates on the fellowship bench? for one that succeeds, three, at least, must mis-

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carry. Why is not something done for them? Why are they perpetually lost in oblivion? *Laudatur virtus et alget.* The commendation of a day is their only prize, and their names afterwards are remembered merely by their own little circle: but we will hope better things. One * gentleman, high in his profession, and remarkable for his public spirit, hath of late set a bright example of this kind, and I trust it will be followed.

I have now gone through the first part of my proposed plan, and have endeavoured to develop the origin of that dearth of publications, in the College of Dublin, which hath been unfairly resolved into a want of literary merit. I proceed to the second branch, namely, the evils which affect the Students, which threaten to deprive them not of fame and character, but of the very means of subsistence.

Many and great are the discouragements which offer themselves to the Students who are intended for the learned professions, particularly those designed for the Church. Discouragements, which have encreased to such

* The Bishop of Cloyne.

a height,

a height, that unless a speedy stop is put to them, men will find that, far from being benefited by having received a regular education, they will have cause to repent of the pains and trouble they have taken. They will find, that after passing through a long and laborious course of study, attended with an expence, which few of them could well bear, they have been toiling only for beggary and ruin. If, on their coming out into the world, the doors of the professions, which they wished to enter, are shut against them, the education they have received will but tend to make them miserable: it will have given to most of them sentiments ill suited to poverty; to many an elegance of mind, and refinement of temper, which will but make them more susceptible of distress. They will be tremblingly alive all o'er to contempt and indignity; yet, these are too often the lot of indigence. That these dangers actually impend over them, will appear plainly, if we consider the following facts.

There has been of late in the College a greater number of Students, than ever hath been known before. The undergraduates at present amount to

to about five hundred and sixty five. The number of those, who have annually entered, taken at a medium for ten years past, is one hundred and forty four. The number of those, who have annually obtained the degree of Bachelor of Arts, at a medium during the same time, amounts to seventy eight. Of these far the greater part are intended for Holy Orders, as is the case in all Colleges, they having been usually founded, in a peculiar manner, for the education of Ecclesiastics, and for that reason, I principally insist on the hardships which await that order of Students. The graduates designed for the Church every year, experience shews to be about two-thirds of their whole number. They are then, by our computation, about fifty two. I do not say so many are actually ordained every year, but so many wish to take orders, and make the profession of Divinity their whole object. It is an indisputable fact, that of this number, nearly half will be left without provision in the present situation of affairs. That the annual vacancies in the Church of Ireland are not adequate to the crowd of candidates, is certain. The computation is easy. It is well known that the Clergy of this kingdom do not exceed twelve hundred.

hundred. If this is doubted, the registries of the respective dioceses will prove it. Any man acquainted with the calculation of lives, will see, that not more than thirty six * of this number, will die in the course of a year at a medium. The number of persons, who desire to be ordained, I have said will be fifty two. Therefore nearly one-third of them will, of necessity, be unprovided for. But the evil doth not stop here. Of the thirty six vacancies, many are filled up by strangers, who never were in the College of Dublin. And when those usually thus filled are deducted, my assertion will be found true, that nearly half of the graduates in that College will have no provision. If strangers were not admitted into the church, if the evil only arose from the small number of livings and curacies in the kingdom, you could not complain. It would be an evil, as things now stand, without a remedy. But you

* The computation is, that in every hundred men, from the age of twenty three to extreme old age, three will die every year. Of twelve hundred then, thirty six will die. But as this computation is usually made for populous cities, and most of the Clergy live in the country, and generally lead more temperate lives than other men, the average of deaths among them will be less than I have stated it.

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have reason vehemently to complain, that out of the confined provision this kingdom affords, a great part is absorbed; that of this small number of vacancies, a great part is filled by men whom you know not, and to whom ye are unknown. Many of those, who might be provided for, if Graduates of this College were properly attended to, will see aliens in possession of the income, to which they themselves have so equitable a right; must starve at the doors of those who are eating your bread; and in many instances, see the idle and incapable enjoying the rewards due to those, who have borne the fatigues and labour of the day. Ye cannot retreat. Ye have assumed a character which ye are not at liberty to resign. If you were, where would you turn? ye were driven in such numbers to the College, by the wretched state of trade and manufactures. It is the curse of a poor country where trade is oppressed, that it is consequently dishonourable; it is true, our commercial restrictions are taken off, but it will be a long time before commerce will be in that flourishing condition, requisite to open any very favourable prospect.

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Those who have not yet been ordained, might possibly turn their thoughts to some other of the learned professions. That of the law is the most obvious. But here they will find a new and strong bar to their hopes. In a profession already overstocked, it might be expected that some particular encouragement would be shewn to men, who were distinguished from their brethren by having, with great pains and cost, obtained a liberal education. On the contrary, regulations have been lately entered into, which oblige every Student in the Inns of Court in England, to have his name entered in the books of those Inns five years before he can be called to the Bar. It is too late for a Graduate to turn his eyes to a profession where, after having waited five years for admission, he may probably perform a noviciate of as many more. But of this more hereafter.

It would be wonderful, if you should not be affected by the gloomy picture I have exhibited. I will proceed to enquire into the causes which have contributed to its production.

Of these, the first I shall mention is, the introduction of Englishmen to the best ecclesiastical preferments among us. I do not speak at
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present of one or two persons in very high stations which, it can hardly be expected, in the relation which this kingdom bears to England, should not be filled from thence ; but of that numerous assemblage of men, who, not being able in England to satisfy their ambition, are perpetually crowding to this country, in the train of every Viceroy, and when they have been raised themselves, use all the interest and weight they have acquired for the benefit of others of their countrymen, whom they encourage to come over. The value of the benefices they obtain is still more to be considered than their number. A great part of the dignitaries of the Church of Ireland is composed of them, and it is computed, that they enjoy one-fourth part of the whole revenues of the Clergy of the kingdom. I do not mean to impeach their characters, or to detract from their merit ; many of them are most respectable men, of great learning, and exemplary conduct : but, I will say, that men of equal desert might be found in this country ; that our national character is not inferior ; and that, though they may deserve every reward at home, it ought not to be bestowed upon them in another kingdom, while the natives of that kingdom are left

left without provision. Let no man say, that these considerations cannot affect the general body of young men, who are not born to the hopes of these high preferments, which are usually granted to the natives of Britain; that they will be contented with a much humbler condition, and look not beyond the support which a curacy affords. The evil is most extensive, and reaches sensibly to them. It is obvious, that if these preferments were not supplied by the natives of England, they must be given to your own countrymen. As matters now stand, there is an invincible bar to your obtaining them: but if they were confined to Irishmen, ye would at least have some chance of success. And is there to be found, especially in youth, one of so weak and feeble a spirit, as to think himself incapable of obtaining them by laudable and honourable means, if they were open to his brethren? But, supposing some of you could not obtain them yourselves, others would, who are now limited to smaller preferments or curacies, which would then be left for you. A series of vacancies would be the consequence of every promotion; they who are in possession of smaller livings would be preferred; they would be succeeded by curates; while, for the new-comers, cura-

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cies, at least, would be left vacant ; every man in his order, as preferred, would leave some sort of provision for those who followed, which, though at last it would be but slender, would put the possessor above want. The additional number of curacies even would at least be equal to the number of preferments now in the hands of Englishmen. But, at present, a total stop is, in many cases, put to this succession. The vacant preferment is filled from England, and no one native of this country advances a step.

But one material circumstance is forgotten. These men, now possessed of small livings, or curacies, and who would then be preferred, are your friends, your relations, and, if they had the means of kindness, would be your benefactors. Stinted, as they now are, they can only lament the obstructions to your progress : but were they amply provided for, you would find a wonderful change ! They would relieve your difficulties ; they would alleviate the expence of education, and their patronage would become the instrument of your promotion. Nothing of this nature can be expected from strangers : they are wedded to another country : they are perpetually looking back to it
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with affection : they remember old connexions and friendships, and wish naturally to assist the men they know and love. And here consider whether the evil doth not extend to every one of you? Young men will be recommended to them from England, for those very curacies, which you regard as the only attainable objects of your ambition. From the late increase of the salaries of curates here, and the very small stipend they have in England, often not exceeding ten pounds per ann. we may be confident that this will frequently happen. A train of followers will rush in, who will occupy the very first step, and impede even your entrance within the ecclesiastical pale. The mischief is of such a nature, that its consequences have no bounds.

It is the common cant of the times that such language is illiberal ; that we are all members of one and the same empire, united by the strictest bonds ; that no invidious distinctions should be made, and that it is for the good of the whole, that the inhabitants of each country should be indiscriminately advanced in every part of the common dominions. I cannot accede to this. The natives of a country have
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in justice a prior claim, they will always be more able to do service in it, than strangers. * Their knowledge of it, and connexions in it, give them the advantage. Who can be so useful to the Church and kingdom, as those who are best acquainted with both? But where doth England affect such liberality of sentiment. Not at home; but in the countries annexed to her crown, in what she calls her dependencies. On them she pours the overplus of her sons, who cannot be taken care of within herself, but she doth not return the favour. Her church preferments are given to her own children. Those of any consideration to Graduates in her Universities. These seminaries cannot furnish a supply for all the curacies in England. The body of the Clergy is too vast. In one diocese, that of Lincoln, we find not fewer than thirteen hundred; a greater number than is in all Ireland. They admit curates therefore often without degrees, from necessity. But no benefices of any value are given away from Graduates of Oxford or Cambridge. Nay, further, it is thought indecent to bestow livings, situated in the neigh-

* Vide a letter of the Duke of Ormond. Leland's History, vol. 3, p. 450.

bourhood of those Universities on any but the Fellows of some College in them ; it would be thought monstrous, to appoint any person to the superintendence of those Colleges who had not, by spending the greater part of his life in them, become intimately acquainted with their institutions and interests.

It must be allowed, that sometimes a native of another kingdom, arrives at considerable rank in the church of England. But then he is some man, who has gone over there in early youth, who hath received his first education there, who hath imbibed all the opinions and even prejudices of the nation. Such a man will consider himself, and ought to be considered, as an Englishman ; and here I must observe, that when I speak of Englishmen in Ireland, I would not be understood to include those who have been educated here. They ought to be looked on as natives.

What hath been the conduct of England, when her preferments ecclesiastical or civil have been invaded by foreigners ? In the early periods of her history, all her valuable livings were given to Italian Ecclesiastics, who came over in infinite shoals. The fury of the English

lish exceeded all bounds, in the reign of Henry the Third; it broke out into the most violent outrages, insurrections every where prevailed. The houses of the Italians were burnt, their barns broken open, many of themselves imprisoned, and their lives endangered. When an enquiry was afterwards made into the origin of these seditious proceedings, they were found to have been encouraged by the gentry of the kingdom in general, and by many persons of the first consequence. God forbid that we should approve such wicked and unmanly resentment. But surely England cannot be surpris'd if we presume to complain.

When, in our own times, the Scotch were thought to have engrossed too many civil employments, what endless abuse was heard in every company? what virulent libels were every day published against them? what uniform antipathy to them hath reigned on this account, in the state, and how carefully and successfully have they been, except in very few instances, excluded from the English church?

I now come to another mischief, which men who do not look far before them, believe to be

be more considerable than the former, of which however, it is undoubtedly in some degree a consequence. The ordaining men upon Scotch degrees. There cannot be a greater diversity, than that between the preparation of the Scotch and Irish Graduate. In Scotland, to obtain a degree, neither pains, nor study, nor expence, nor time, are requisite. It is only necessary to attend for a few months the lectures of a Professor which are read by him to the Students, and by which they may improve or not, as they please. No trial is made of their proficiency, nor any proof desired of their understanding these lectures. Like the Scholars of Pythagoras, their only duty is to listen in silence, and as their mistakes can never discover themselves, it is impossible they can ever be corrected. At the end of this short time, they come forth to the world, with all their mushroom honours full upon them. How different is this course from the ordeal of the Irish Student. He is obliged to prosecute his studies during four years and upwards. He is periodically and frequently examined with great strictness. His merits and progress in Science are made public, by judgments openly delivered. Shame and honour combine to spur on youthful emulation.

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He has the previous advantages of public and private lectures, where the knowledge he has acquired in his chamber is scrutinized, the assistance he wants is afforded, the mistakes he falls into are discovered and corrected.

Furthered by these helps, and sifted by all these trials, it is impossible that the dullest or most indolent man should leave the College without a considerable degree of real and useful information. Penalties and disgrace are annexed to gross negligence and ignorance, and the gradation of punishments is such, that the offender who persists, finds himself every term further removed from obtaining his degree. The sum of his studies is perpetually increasing, and without industry, he is arrested at every step. Whoever finds himself unequal to this task, is obliged to leave the College, and certainly it is useless for him to stay, where he is incapable of improvement. This however can rarely happen to a young man of tolerable parts and moderate industry. The course, though difficult, is not absurdly so, it does not exceed the usual capacity of young men, nor demand efforts which cannot be expected from them. Those who find themselves inferior to this vulgar standard, generally

generally fly to the Scotch Colleges. As soon as they arrive, the prospect brightens. No rubs are now met in their way to the desired degree. No unlucky or troublesome questions are asked them; all is smooth and easy; it signifies not whether they have common learning, or common sense; their object is speedily obtained. But surely, if the Universities of Scotland think fit to lavish their degrees upon such men, they cannot expect we will be imposed upon, or believe them to be persons fit to be entrusted with the ministry of holy things. Upon such a state of the case, what can be more cruel or more intolerable, than that such persons should anticipate the provision due to those who have remained here, to undergo the burthen, which they themselves could not sustain? Short lived indeed was the glory of their Fellows, who continued with earnestness to run in the race, but who see the prize so unjustly bestowed on men they left so far behind them.

Instances have not been wanting, where the man, whose incapacity has obliged him to desert his class, in their first or second year, has returned a Master of Arts, before they entered on their third. I am aware of the objections which

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will

will be made to these observations on Scotch degrees. It will be said, that the Colleges of that kingdom are in high reputation; that their Professors are very eminent, and have more generally been distinguished by their writings than ours. That the education received in them is good, as we see by the many considerable men; who come out of them that the expence there incurred is much less than with us; and that it is illiberal and unjust to exclaim against gentlemen who send their sons, where good education is most cheaply to be had. That their Professors have great merit, I do not deny; nor that gentlemen, blessed with natural talents, will derive useful instructions from attending their lectures; but, that their plan of education is equally well adapted with ours, for the common run of mankind, is absolutely false. What I have already said proves this. Men of great abilities may improve, but it is at their option. There is no necessity, for application, and without such necessity the greater part of mankind will remain in ignorance. Whatever therefore may be the merit of the Scotch Universities, or however useful their scheme of instruction to a studious and diligent man, they afford no criterion of the pupil's having attained that knowledge and information,

formation, which is supposed to attend the obtaining a degree, and which ought to be possessed by all Ecclesiastics. If they were even unexceptionable in this respect; if their scholars were constrained to some degree of application; yet, the time spent in them, frequently being but a few months, is utterly insufficient for the most able man, to make any proficiency. If then their plan of education is a bad one for men of common parts, and their undergraduate course too short to be useful to those of more brilliant faculties, I hope it will not be said, that the cheapness of living in that country, or the meanness of the stipend to be paid to the Professor, are reasons sufficient to give a preference to their degrees. But we will suppose that the same exertion was requisite to obtaining a degree there as here; that the time of preparation was equally long, and that, on the whole, many gentlemen preferred their mode of education. Others, and probably far the greater part of men, will prefer our mode of education; will not chuse to send their sons to such a distance from home, and will cherish an affection for the institutions of their own country. In such a case, I must insist that they ought to be favoured in preference to a few Seceders, and that it is not
illiberal

illiberal or ungenerous, but political and just, for a country to encourage the growth of the Sciences in itself rather than exotic productions. But this is not the present case. Far otherwise! now, a few gentlemen, it is true, chuse to send their sons to Scotland; not because superior learning is there acquired, but because the time there to be passed is shorter, and the expence on every account less. And shall these anticipate, and prevent from having even common maintenance, the children of those, who, from love to their own University, and an opinion of its superiority, are willing to expose them to the difficulties which accompany its excellent regulations. I seldom have heard its system condemned; but, allowing that it has faults, let them be corrected if possible; but at all events, we owe superior regard and reverence to the *alma mater* of our own kingdom.

The truth is, the arguments I have stated, in favour of Scotch degrees, though I have heard some of them urged in conversation, cannot be supposed to have great weight with the right reverend Prelates, on whom it depends to admit or refuse those who have taken them. Those who have admitted them, have always implicitly

citly allowed the justice of my complaint, by assigning as their excuse for this act, the want of a sufficient number of Graduates, from the College of Dublin, to supply the vacant curacies.

This may have been true formerly, but certainly the supposition, if made at present, is founded in mistake. I will only mention again summarily what I have said above. There are about thirty-six vacancies annually, at a medium, in the church of Ireland. The number of Graduates which the College of Dublin annually sends forth, who wish to take orders, at a medium is fifty-two. It furnishes, therefore, nearly one-third more than are wanted to supply that church. How cruel is it then, to give any thing away from them?

I have dwelt upon this grievance, of admitting Scotch degrees, because it is the one most generally exclaimed against; yet, after all, it is by no means extensive, nor can it be compared to that which I at first stated, the introduction of Englishmen to the best preferments in the kingdom,

Very

Very few Bishops do ordain upon such degrees; not one, I believe, who has been educated in our University: for, though many have been ordained upon them, this has been the acts of chiefly one, whose conduct too is supposed to have been influenced in a great measure by pique. Besides, no great share of the revenues of the church falls to the lot of these men, but the natives of England, as I have said, swallow up one-fourth part of them. And these very men are the persons, who are most likely to pay no attention to your degrees, who, not being bred among you, will feel no affection for the society of which ye are members, and will be ready to listen to any recommendations, in favour of men educated in the Universities of Great Britain, or even of men not educated in any University whatever.

It may possibly be said, that I have omitted an observation which may be made in favour of Scotch degrees, viz. that the undergraduate course in Universities bears no relation to the study of Divinity, and is not essentially necessary for the profession of it, and therefore, that which is most speedily and cheaply passed through is best; but this observation affects
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all degrees whatever, and leads me to a third very important grievance, ordaining those who have no degrees at all.

The man who is hardy enough to deny, that an education in one of our learned Universities, is a qualification for holy orders which ought rigorously to be insisted on, excepting when persons thus qualified cannot be procured, or when the person who offers himself to be ordained has given proofs of extraordinary abilities, and uncommon learning, must go further, and deny the usefulness of human learning in understanding, and supporting the truths of Christianity.

This bold objection comes with a very bad grace indeed in this age of infidelity. When religion is universally attacked, by whom shall she be defended? by the ignorant and illiterate, or by the learned and intelligent? Can he who is unversed in ancient languages, satisfactorily explain doctrines and precepts delivered originally in them? Will he be able to answer objections often arising from ignorance of those languages? Will the man unskilled in true reasoning be able to encounter the subtleties of an Hume, or the unpolished and illiterate enter
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the lists against the elegant and classical Gibbon? How shall the objections of Voltaire, and other writers of the same stamp, be refuted, without a thorough knowledge of the history, customs, and manners of ancient nations, of chronology, of many branches of natural philosophy? But the utility of human learning to the defence and advancement of Christianity, has been so ably proved by many eminent writers, particularly the late celebrated Bishop of Gloucester, and Dr. Jortin, that I may be dispensed with, from adding any thing further on the subject.

But it will be said, this is all a sophism, that human learning is necessary for the divine, is true; but it doth not follow, that it is inseparable from academical education. Many men of great learning never were members of an University; I admit it; some men of great abilities and uncommon application, have made great advances in science, without foreign helps. But observations drawn from them can never apply to mankind in general. It might as reasonably be expected, that the bulk of men should, like the celebrated Pascal, without the aid either of books or instructors, make a considerable progress in the mathematical sciences,

as that they should, unassisted by academical instruction, be fitted to become teachers of the Christian religion. The truth is, the greater part even of those, who enjoy such aids fall very short of a Clark, an Hoadly or a Warburton; and a great majority of those who enjoy them not, must prove scandalously deficient of the learning necessary for a common parish curate. Surely no comparison can be made, if we take them in a general view, between those of the clergy, who have been regularly bred, and the intruders who have of late crept into the body. The latter are for the most part men, who have tried other professions and have not succeeded in them, or who, having squandered their fortunes in idle dissipation, wish to find in the church a comfortable resource. Their friends find this is the easiest method of providing for them, and if they have parliamentary influence, direct it in this line. The church is particularly obliged to the army for the ample levies it affords her. One would think that some administrations had seriously adopted, with a little variation, the sentiments which Swift puts in the mouth of a Captain :

*To give a young gentleman right education,
The army's the only good school in the nation.*

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This

This is cruelty in the extreme to the clergyman left without provision. He cannot throw off the clerical character, or look for any other means of subsistence, while his rivals are suffered, after all their other schemes in life have proved abortive, to enlist themselves in the sacred order.

I will beg leave to add one thing more on the present head. The use of living in learned societies is derived not merely from the books which are there read. A taste is acquired for reading in youth, which never deserts the man. Curiosity is awakened and when the storm of juvenile passions is abated, it will be satisfied. Much information arises often from the company and conversation of those members of the society, who have made a greater proficiency in their studies. Ambition is roused by seeing the rewards of merit in others. Emulation is excited, by observing the progress of their cotemporaries. Shame is alarmed by the apprehension of being outdone :

*Æstuat ingens—
imo in corde pudor.*

Every

Every generous feeling is called forth into action, and from a mind thus prepared, the best fruits may be expected.

I have now done with the church, and should have gone on to speak of the discouragements to Students designed for the bar, were I not apprised, that very lately, heads of a bill have been introduced into the House of Commons, in which some allowance is made in their favour. This bill proposes to admit Masters of Arts on the same footing, on which all Students at the Temple, were, before the rule formerly mentioned, (which requires an enrolment of five years in the books of the Inns of Court,) was established, and to deduct in favour of Bachelors, two years from the time to be generally insisted upon. It would be unfair, therefore, to dwell upon this head, until we see the success of this bill. But as this indulgence has met with the disapprobation of many considerable men, not from want of regard to the College, but because they think it will prejudice the legal profession, give me leave concisely to mention some reasons, which plead strongly in behalf of such an indulgence.

A general

A general complaint had prevailed that the Bar was too much crowded, and that some improper and unworthy persons had found means to get admission to it. The late rule was therefore entered into, for the purpose of increasing the difficulties of being called, by enlarging the time, and augmenting the expence of previous preparation, and by requiring a longer trial of good behaviour.

It was justly thought, that no man ought to be a Lawyer, who had not a property sufficient to enable him to bear the expence of a suitable education, and put him above the temptations of want, and whose conduct was not unexceptionable.

How this rule can be effectual for these purposes, it is difficult to see, as only the same term of actual residence at the Temple is required as before, as the annual expence of keeping a person's name in the books without residing is trifling, and as the name may be entered at any age. But whether effectual or not, I think it clear, that the man who hath entered the University, and continued in it to the time of taking his degree, ought to be excused from some of its obligations. He hath already fulfilled

fulfilled in a great measure the requisites desired by that rule. He hath already subjected himself to a heavy expence, to a delay of four years in his progress to the Bar, and to a scrutiny of character much stricter than can be made in the Inns of Court. Indeed in those Inns at present there is no criterion of a young man's merit, no inspectors of his actions, he is left to his own discretion, and his conduct must be remarkably infamous to attract the public notice.

In Colleges, the least misdemeanour, or even indiscretion, is observed : but, if the Graduate shall find, that the restrictions he hath submitted to in College, are not taken into consideration, and that his brother Templar, who did not wait for an academical education, has far got the start of him, and, by the time he has finished his studies here, is almost entitled to his certificate ; What will be the consequence ? Men will go to the Temple, satisfied with the rudiments learned at schools. There is no limited age for putting on the Barrister's gown. With unripened parts, and crude indigested scanty knowledge, they will disgrace their calling. Law is a regular science. To understand its theory, a knowledge of other sciences

sciences is previously requisite. To form the practitioner of unfulfilled fame, liberal sentiments should be early inculcated: the authors, therefore, of the late regulation, must have wished to countenance these preparatives. An academical education contributes powerfully to both; and yet, the rule strangely tended to discountenance its best assistant.

It may be expected that I should now proceed to point out some remedy for these ills: but that would be in me too great presumption. My only object is, to point out the difficulties which the College has to contend with; to mark them to Government; to the Legislature; to the Episcopal Bench; to the nation at large. It should be yours. The remedy lies not within yourselves: ye cannot redress the grievances we all deplore. That is far beyond your reach. But ye can complain, for that is the privilege even of the miserable. Nor have you been entirely silent; and it is with pleasure I have seen, since I first began this little essay to awaken you, that you have made some attempt to represent the approaching distress, and to ask for relief. But the voice of the University hath been a small still voice; it hath not reached beyond your representatives,

representatives, and a few Members of the House of Commons who are your friends ; and how far they may feel a reluctance to taking any steps which they may apprehend, and I think erroneously, would give offence to men in power ; or how far they may be obstructed in their endeavours to do good, by their own connections, intimacies, and interests, it is difficult to judge.

But if men in general were interested in your cause, no such thing could be feared ; they will be so at length. Some of the greatest * and ablest men in the nation have long since insisted upon, and feelingly represented discouragements similar to those which you now experience ; but, what they said seems to have been forgotten : it is your wisdom never to forget it ; to cry aloud, and spare not. Such a conduct, accompanied with modesty and decency, will have a good effect.

* Duke of Ormond, in a letter to a Secretary of State in England ; Leland's Hist. vol. 3, p. 450 ; Dean Swift, in a letter to Lord Peterborough on the affairs of Ireland.

It will make the nation attentive to your present circumstances and situation. The public will reflect, that it is deeply concerned in these things, even more so than yourselves. Your interest is temporary, theirs perpetual. Who is there that, in the course of a very few years, doth not see in this fluctuating body, some person dear to him, some near relation, or closely-allied friend? who hath not felt some obligations to this place himself? who doth not expect to see some of his offspring, or of those intimately connected with him, in possession of its emoluments, or claiming the advantages which ought to follow its degrees?

These advantages are common property; they are, or ought to be open to all who chuse to qualify themselves for them, and every one may hope to acquire them in his turn. It is wonderful that we should even hear, in private conversation, the College, nay, sometimes the whole clergy, mentioned as isolated bodies, having interests totally distinct from those of the public! Will not every sensible Lay-man say, 'Who are they but ourselves?' Will he not think that, in patronizing them, he is cherishing his own blood; that in consulting
their

their interests, he does but provide for those of his own family ?

Your sensibility will have a second good effect ; it will turn the eyes of the bench of Bishops upon you, and it would argue want of candour to imagine, that any thing more is necessary to induce them to do you justice ; it would be absurd to suppose, that they wish to hurt you, or that they do not wish to serve you. But they have been unacquainted with your real situation, or they labour under mistakes with regard to it. Let the true state of the College be made known to them, and it will be amended. They are men, in general, most deservedly revered. From whom can more be expected, than from those who at present fill the episcopal order ? or when was there a truer and more active friend to our church and nation, than the venerable Prelate who holds the first place among them ?

Here then lies your remedy : in the voice of the nation, in the wisdom of the legislature, in the justice of the rulers of the church ; and, if the attempt of a feeble individual, to make your grievances known, shall, in the smallest

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degree,

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degree, terminate to obtain redress, the reflection will give him the most heartfelt satisfaction to the end of his days.

I am,

Gentlemen,

Your sincere friend.

